**Bring out prophecy – born of a virgin**

**Introduction**

How do we bring some Christmas into this? Christmas is supposed to sound like this, but it sounds like this. Use Christmas sounds. But often it sounds more like this. What kind of Christmas story is this? There are just some sounds that when you hear them, you know what’s coming. Sounds that are just so familiar that you don’t even have to guess what happens next. For example, let’s see if you can guess what’s coming next when you hear this sound:

(Sound clip #1 - Jaws)

Anyone know what this is from? Yep, that’s right. Jaws! You know that whenever you hear this sound you better not be in the water or else you’ll be on the lunch menu for the great white shark we all know and love.

Let’s try another one.

(Sound clip #2 - Vader)

Kind of creepy! I know we have some Star Wars fans in the house who know that whenever you hear that sound, the dark side of the force is coming!

One last one.

(Sound Clip #3 – Freddie)

Not good! When you hear that you know the brown fedora and claw hand are not far away, waiting to bring about your end. Sorry for the grim description!

These sounds create all sorts of feelings for the characters in the movie – of impending doom, chaos, and uncertainty. Just be glad you’re not one of them! But it’s one thing when it’s in a movie, and another when it’s in our lives.

What do we do when circumstances happen in our lives that create a sense of uncertainty or impending doom? These are often out of our control, but the chaos is still there.

Maybe it’s a personal circumstance, like an illness or addiction. Or maybe it’s a relational one, like a family crisis or conflict. It could even be a wider circumstance, like an event in our community or world that causes uncertainty.

It’s in the midst of these circumstances that we all have one thing we long for: peace. But if we’re honest, oftentimes we wonder, is peace even possible? Is this peace or faith? It’s suppose to be faith… bring that into first half.

**Series Recap**

We’re in week 2 of our series, “B.C.” which is all about the story of God and his people in a time “BC”, before Christ. It was in these times that God spoke to his people through special messengers called prophets. Prophets were sent by God in a specific time and place to speak messages of wisdom, instruction, and warning to God’s people. What the prophet’s spoke was important to listen to and follow, but unfortunately they were often ignored. The results were disastrous. In the wake of a prophet’s words falling on deaf ears, God’s people were left to deal with chaos and uncertainty; accompanied by that feeling in the pit of their stomachs. But in the midst of that chaos for God’s people, there was also hope. At the same time the current circumstances left a sense of impending doom, a picture of hope was created. Today, we’re going to look at one of those voices of hope in the midst of chaos, Isaiah. We thought it would be fun for Not KC Kids’ City to help us give an overview of Isaiah:

**(Video: Kids’ City Overview of Isaiah)**

*(Points covered in video – Two kingdoms, in the chaos the prophets speak, mention of bad kings, result of Southern Kingdom)*

**Historical Context**

To understand what’s happening when we begin Isaiah’s ministry, we have to realize that God’s people are entering into a time of great uncertainty. Isaiah starts with this phrase...

**“In the year that King Uzziah died…” Isaiah 6:1a NIV**

King Uzziah was very popular – he was famous and that fame had spread all over the region during the 50+ years he was king. He led a long period of national prosperity. Things were good with the “Big U” in power!

But King Uzziah died, and the reaction was “uh oh.” What happens now? God’s people realized that there long period of prosperity wasn’t guaranteed to continue. The simple reality that they didn’t know who was going to be the next king created a feeling of uncertainty.

The people had high hopes because Uzziah was a reformer, working to break down the political and religious corruption taking place. Now those hopes were dashed with his death. There was a feeling that the promise of change was dead along with Uzziah.

Not only was there anxiety caused by the uncertainty of who would be the next king, but now there was an increased threat from the invading army of Assyrians. At the time the Assyrians were really powerful, and that power served them well. Not having a king was a recipe for disaster in a time where “survival of the fittest” was the name of the game.

These circumstances caused a great deal of anxiety for Isaiah personally. He was a reformer like Uzziah, and the hopes and dreams he had for change now seemed glim.

Not knowing what the future holds will do that to you.

**Years of Uncertainty**

God’s people were feeling uncertain on a national scale. We’ve certainly had times where there was that same feeling for us too. In fact, I can probably just throw out a couple of dates and you would immediately recall the feelings. For example, what about September 11, 2001? It’s been called the defining event of a generation of Americans.

 A lot of us can probably remember where we were on that day. I remember I was in an 8am class in college when one of our peers interrupted the class to let us know what happened. I can also remember driving home that day with this feeling of uncertainty.

Or what about 2008 – Some of us in the room may have been a victim of the economic downturn, losing a house or retirement. Some neighborhoods that were being built were never finished, and even stand empty today as a reminder.

We’ve felt those feelings as a nation. Feelings and questions of, is peace even possible? This should be faith.

Bring this to personal situations (not just national)

**A King is Coming**

Better transitions. For God’s people, in the midst of that uncertainty there is a king. Continuing on from verse 1 in Isaiah 6, we read a vision that Isaiah has:

***In the year that King Uzziah died, I saw the Lord, high and exalted, seated on a throne; and the train of his robe filled the temple. Above him were seraphim, each with six wings: With two wings they covered their faces, with two they covered their feet, and with two they were flying. And they were calling to one another:***

***“Holy, holy, holy is the Lord Almighty;
    the whole earth is full of his glory.” Isaiah 6:1-3 NIV***

In the midst of wondering what in the world they were going to do without a king, God gives Isaiah this powerful reminder that there is another king. And this king is no small king. This king is a king who is not going to die and leave you in uncertainty. This king will reign forever with power and might. This king owns the entire world and will be worshipped in increasing intensity as his presence fills every person and place.

Now THAT vision of a king would absolutely destroy uncertainty, wouldn’t it? But there still remains this sense of uncertainty, because it’s one thing to just have a king like I just described, but it’s entirely something else to have a king that is going to leave his throne and come to us…

***Therefore the Lord himself will give youa sign: The virginwill conceive and give birth to a son, andwill call him Immanuel.*** ***Isaiah 7:14 NIV***

There’s a king, and that king is coming to be with you.

***Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. Isaiah 9:7 NIV***

Knowing the king is coming is sometimes a dangerous thing. Because we get all sorts of pictures in our head of what the king will be like. God’s people did the same thing. They thought the king might be:

* A war hero instead of a baby.
* Rich instead of poor.
* A land grabber instead of a peace maker.

We do the same thing. We want someone like us in positions of power and prominence to give us a better seat at the table. Or better yet, we give our lives to attaining those positions of power because we’ve bought the lie that power means that you knock everyone else down on the way to it.

When it comes to our realization that the king is coming, we always want to dictate the terms, don’t we? We’re more comfortable that way. But with this king, it doesn’t work like that. This king is going to arrive in power, yes. But that power isn’t the kind you think it is.

There is a king, and that king is coming, and that king is here. Better transitions…

***The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35 NIV***

The king has a name: Jesus. It’s into the uncertainty and chaos that Jesus comes as king.

**Jesus: Our King Who Overcomes**

So the king of all kings finally comes. This is the one Israel has been waiting for from the days of Isaiah and Uzziah and even long before that. Planted right into the midst of the chaos and uncertainty, Jesus was to bring his kingdom to earth. I love to think about some of those nights where the sick would be brought to Jesus from all over. Thousands gathered and Jesus somehow made the time to heal each one. All that chaos and all the uncertainty of those hurting people and right there in the middle of it all was a person. A *king*. *The* king.

I imagine the people that followed him thought that their days of uncertainty were over. Finally…*finally*…there was someone who could make it right. They saw Jesus perform all these amazing wonders. Healing the sick, feeding the masses, even raising the dead! Nothing was going to stop them. It was unthinkable that any of this would come to an end, but that’s exactly what was happening. The chaos seemed to push back. The long awaited king now stood trial before the Roman government accused and tried…ironically…as being a king.

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

“Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

“You are a king, then!” said Pilate.

John 18:33-37

For Jesus followers, this was the worst of their greatest fears. The uncertainty that the death of King Uzziah brought was nothing compared to what was taking place with this king. Can you imagine the pit in their stomachs as Jesus’ closest followers watched his trial from a distance. In their minds, everything they had hoped for was crashing down right in front of them. The king of all kings was standing trial, beaten and humiliated by a lesser king.

They even twisted together a crown of thorns, placed it on his head and bowed before him, mocking his kingship. “Hail, king of the Jews” they taunted as they slapped his face again and again. After they had humiliated him they led him away to be crucified.

Could this be a refrain starting in the intro? How’s that for a Christmas story? But I bring this up because especially in the midst of the chaos and uncertainty *there is a reason for faith*. Matthew, Mark, and John all mention this in their Gospels. They use a peculiar word to describe the crown that was placed upon Jesus’ head to mock his kingship. You see, there are two different Greek words that we translate into the word crown. One of them is *diadema.* This is a king’s crown. (diadema = king’s crown) Maybe you’ve heard that old song, “Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown him Lord of all.” It would make a lot of sense to use this word. After all, the soldiers are mocking his kingship.

But it’s not diadema that the Gospel writers use. Instead, it’s another word for crown – *stephanos*. But the place you’d normally see the word stephanos used isn’t a twisted crown of thorns, but rather twisted laurels and ivy. This is the crown you put on the head of someone who wins at the Greek games…the Olympics! This word isn’t a king’s crown, IT’S A VICTOR’S CROWN. A stephanos is a VICTOR’S CROWN! (stephanos = victor’s crown)

Consider that. In the midst of all this humiliation and defeat. Jesus is being led away to be crucified. His life seized from him and his kingdom presumably coming to an abrupt end. But what is gracing his brow but a victor’s crown! The very symbol meant to mock him and tear him down is a symbol of his victory.

In the very center of all the chaos and uncertainty of that day was a reason for faith. A KING. A king wearing a victor’s crown.

To this day he wears that victory. The book of Revelation says

 “On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: king of kings and lord of lords.” -Rev 19:16

Our king is the one overcomes…

**In the Midst of Our Anxiety**

TP needs to share something that brings us anxiety. This type of stuff needs to be earlier. We’re no strangers to uncertainty here in this room. Many of us today are wrestling with the uncertainty of this life. We carry the burden of anxiety in our finances, the brokenness of our relationships, and worry over the future of our children.

My worries only seem to grow with the size of my kids. There was a time when I was just worried about them staying asleep through the night, but every passing season brings new and bigger challenges. I (Jason) remember the first time one of my kids got in trouble at school. I can’t remember exactly what it was, but it couldn’t have been too big. It was kindergarten after all. Oh yeah…I remember! My son had used “the bad finger.” I had to chuckle a little bit when I got the email from the teacher, but it felt a little like I myself was back and school and being called to the principals office.

That little day was just a glimpse into the uncertainty of the future. We’re not even to the teenage years yet! But I have to wonder, am I doing this right? Am I making the right decisions and giving my kids everything they need. And there’s so much I wish I could protect them from in this world, but there they go every day. Right into chaos and uncertainty of this life.

Maybe you’re sitting here today and the worries of this life have closed in around you. You feel the pressure every day without relief. Even if you’re not along you still feel alone. It seems like the moment you overcome one obstacle there’s another headed right your way ready to run you over.

To this very day, please know this, I believe there is a king…a king who wore a crown of victory when he carried our shame. A king who still stands in the midst of our chaos…king of kings and lord of lords.

Corrie ten Boom, a Dutch watch maker who fought to free Jews from the Holocaust by hiding them in her home, once said, ““When a train goes through a tunnel and it gets dark, you don’t throw away the ticket and jump off. You sit still and trust the engineer.”

I don’t have any quick fixes for us this morning, but what if we did just that. What if today in the midst of this dark tunnel, we sat still and trusted the engineer? Because there’s a reason for faith. We have a king. Our king came here. Our king is victorious. And our king has not abandoned us.

Mitchell suggested bringing “there is a king, that king is coming, that king is here.

**Conclusion and response**

I want to lead us a moment of stillness this morning. (Totally quiet room, no pad)

Think about the things the things that worry you the most.

Picture the darkness of the tunnel.

In the midst of all the uncertainty, recognize that there is a reason for faith. There is a king who is here in the middle of it all.

Pray this with me:

Father, I lay down all my worries before you. I recognize that there is a king in the midst of the chaos. I trust his kingship, and I rejoice in his victory. Amen.